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*This essay traces the story of a panel painting of Saint George and the Dragon made by Jan van Eyck that traveled overland and by sea from Bruges, to Valencia, to Barcelona, and on to Naples, where it arrived at the newly established court of Alfonso of Aragon in Summer 1445. Through close study of the textual and material evidence that the picture, now lost, left along the way, the essay follows the journey of an object in motion, traveling within a real and imagined network of people, artworks, and artistic technologies. It shows that the painting's actual and remembered movement across space generated meaning when the panel arrived in Naples in 1445, in particular in relation to Alfonso's own political trajectory from Spain to Italy and his capture of Naples in a victory that he attributed in part to Saint George. It proposes that the panel's significance in its immediate reception at Alfonso's court in Naples was informed by the painting's very subject and pictorial structure. Finally, the essay suggests that these aspects of the picture also informed its reception in the early art historical literature in ever-evolving accounts of the invention of oil painting and the artistic dynamics between Naples, Italy, and northern Europe.**

At the center of this essay is a lost picture: a panel painting of Saint George and the Dragon made by Jan van Eyck that traveled overland and by sea from Bruges, to Valencia, to Barcelona, and on to Naples, where it arrived at the newly established court of Alfonso of Aragon in Summer 1445.

Around this lost picture we can assemble an unusually rich body of textual and material evidence: records of payment and a letter that document its transport to and arrival in Naples; a detailed description written by one of its early observers; and a series of copies and variations — Netherlandish, Spanish, and Neapolitan — that the painting left in its wake. Long after its actual journey from Bruges to Naples, and even after the object itself went untraced, the painting took on a literary afterlife in sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century histories of Neapolitan art. Indeed, the story of van Eyck's *Saint George and the Dragon* between Bruges and Naples remains a touchstone for our own art histories of Renaissance painting in Naples and in the Mediterranean network in which the city was a key node. In these narratives, the picture works as a token of the complex dynamics of exchange between northern Europe and Naples in the fifteenth century¹.

Together, the textual and material evidence that the picture has left behind tells a story of an object in motion, traveling within a real and imagined network of people, artworks, and artistic technologies. This essay traces that story: the painting's physical transport across the Mediterranean; the new works that it informed along the way; an early sixteenth-century description of one of those copies and of the painting itself; and the persistence of the memory of the paint-

ing's arrival in Naples in early histories of Neapolitan art. I show that the painting's actual and remembered movement across space generated meaning when the panel arrived in Naples in 1445, in particular in relation to Alfonso's own political trajectory from Spain to Italy and his capture of Naples in a victory that he attributed in part to Saint George. I propose that the panel's significance in its immediate reception at Alfonso's court in Naples was informed by the painting's very subject and pictorial structure. Finally, I suggest that these aspects of the picture also informed its reception in the early art historical literature in ever-evolving accounts of the invention of oil painting and the artistic dynamics between Naples, Italy, and northern Europe.

Recent scholarship has explored the ways in which Naples challenges art historical models of center and periphery, allowing us instead to understand the city as one center in a polycentric network that was at once artistic, political, social, and historiographic². The present essay follows a single object in motion through this network, and asks how the very condition of its mobility created meaning. By focusing on van Eyck's *Saint George and the Dragon* and its meanings across space, through copies and variations, and into the early literature, the essay offers a new understanding of the significance of the painting upon its arrival in Naples, and of the persistent power of its past and potential movement, both real and imagined. Future research should move beyond van Eyck's lost picture in order to understand the dynamics and agency of the complex web of replicas, reinventions, and citations of the painting in the centuries following its journey from Bruges to Naples.

The voyage of van Eyck's picture from Bruges to Naples by way of Valencia and Barcelona is known through four documents that record its purchase, packing, transport, and arrival at its destination: three records of payment from the royal treasury in Valencia, and a letter that Alfonso of Aragon wrote from his new court in Naples³. From these documents we learn essential facts about the picture itself, and a great deal about the physical logistics of its transport both overland and by sea.

On 2 March 1444 the royal treasury in Valencia recorded a payment to the Valencian merchant Johan Gregori for an acquisition that he had made in Bruges at the request of Alfonso's bailiff Berenguer Mercader⁴. We learn that the painting in question was an oak panel that measured between around 32 and 36 inches (approximately 80-90 cm) high and between around 24 and 27 inches (approximately 60-70 cm) wide. It bore an image of Saint George on horseback as well as «other motifs very skillfully fashioned.» The picture was «painted and elaborated by the

hand of the master Johannes, the great painter of the famous Duke of Burgundy,» that is, Jan van Eyck, who had died just a few years earlier in 1441. Along with four wind instruments, the picture was acquired on Alfonso's behalf in Bruges and was to be sent on to the king in Naples. It cost the considerable sum of 2,000 *sous*⁵. No documentation is known for the Bruges-Valencia leg of the picture's journey; one possible itinerary was by ship along the trading route that passed through the English Channel, continued south, and rounded the Iberian Peninsula.

Five and a half months later, on 22 August 1444, with the painting having just left Valencia for Barcelona, the royal treasury recorded payment for materials and labor required to prepare the painting, the wind instruments, and fifty horse carriages for transport⁶. In a vivid record of the physical logistics involved in packing a panel painting to protect it from the vicissitudes of travel, we learn that the «image of Saint George» was placed in a wooden crate and packed with cotton wool, and that the closed crate was covered with white cloth. Accompanying the crated painting were the four instruments packed in a second crate, and fifty carriages made into bundles that were wrapped in canvas and bound in hemp rope. Painting, instruments, and textiles were sent from Valencia to Barcelona, where they were to be loaded onto a Genoese ship called the *Negróna*, which was to sail from Barcelona to Naples⁷.

Two and a half weeks later, on 10 September, the treasury paid an agent for transporting overland by pack saddle from Valencia to Barcelona the six bundles and two crates, «in one a panel in which is figured and painted in various colors the image of Saint George.» These the agent loaded onto the ship bound for Naples⁸.

The ship that had launched from Barcelona, with Jan van Eyck's *Saint George* aboard, appears to have reached Alfonso of Aragon's court in Naples sometime before the end of June 1445. On 25 June the king wrote from Castel Nuovo in Naples to his representatives in Valencia to settle accounts for the purchase of the picture. In the letter, Alfonso seems to have been able to examine the painting in person, judging it "very ably done" («molt aptament acabada») and commending Berenguer Mercader for his knowledge or judgement («sciencia») in making the purchase⁹.

While they provide a detailed account of the packing and transport of the painting, these documents describe the picture itself only to identify its medium, dimensions, subject, author, and substantial price. To learn more about its appearance, we must rely on a group of works that took van Eyck's painting as their model, either directly or through intermediaries. As van Eyck's panel painting of *Saint George* moved from Bruges to Valencia to Barcelona to Naples, it left a series of

copies and variations in its wake¹⁰.

The earliest of these variations is a small panel now held in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. (figure 1)¹¹. Attributed by most scholars to Rogier van der Weyden and dated to around 1430 or 1435, the Washington panel was presumably made with direct or mediated knowledge of van Eyck's painting at some point before the latter was purchased for Alfonso in 1444. Along with Rogier's *Virgin and Child Enthroned in a Niche* in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, the Washington painting was originally one side of a bilateral panel¹². As it survives, the Washington panel measures 6 inches by 4 5/8 inches — about the size of a postcard.

In the Washington picture, three rocky outcroppings define a wedge of space that stretches from near foreground to deep horizon. Seen from an elevated point of view, this section of earth ranges from barren, bone-strewn wasteland, through verdant farmland, to a walled town built up to the edges of a peninsula, and an inlet that opens onto a broad horizon where sea and mountains meet sky. In the far distance, four ships sail for shore. Along roads, up hills, across bridges, and through streets, people travel on foot and on horse, alone and together, walking, pausing, gathering. They pass through doorways and peer out windows. This town, at the edge of the sea, is a place of departures, arrivals, and passages within, into, and out of the pictorial world. At the top right edge, a solitary wayfarer is just about to pass out of the picture.

It's around one trajectory or passage in particular that the picture's composition is structured, a passage from the bustling, densely built town, across green fields, to a barren, forbidding periphery, which is also the painting's foreground: a swath of dry earth, strewn with bones picked clean, bordered by swamp at left and by a dark wedge-shaped crevice in the rocky outcropping at right. This composition dramatizes the trajectory of a horse and rider, Saint George, who has traveled from city to wasteland, from built world to the primitive cave dwelling of a dragon. As Jacobus de Voragine wrote around 1270 in the *Golden Legend*, George was a peripatetic soldier who traveled from Cappadocia to north Africa to the Holy Land¹³. On his travels through Libya he encountered a princess who was about to be sacrificed to appease a ravenous dragon. George slayed the dragon, and the princess and her entire city converted to Christianity. Cutting across the picture's play of the arcs and curves of bodies and hilly terrain is the high horizon where sea meets sky and the lance that slices a diagonal across the picture plane from top center to bottom right. Horizon and lance are the axes that define the dimensions of the painted surface, just as a red cross defines the height and breadth of George's painted shield. In the immediate right foreground, the painting's composition, George's journey, and the narrative come to a point, in the moment just

before George drives home the lance, pinning the dragon to the ground.

In Spring and Summer 1444, after it had been purchased in Bruges and sent to Valencia, and before it was packed for transport to Barcelona and from there on to Naples, van Eyck's *George and the Dragon* must have been studied and copied by artists in Valencia. In 1468, when the Confraternity of Saint George commissioned Pedro Nisart to make an altarpiece for their chapel in the church of Saint Anthony of Padua in Palma de Mallorca, the painter drew on van Eyck's model (figure 2)¹⁴. Nisart took up the Eyckian motif of George on horseback, with the lance cutting a dramatic diagonal across the composition as it is driven into the mouth of the dragon. Seen from an even higher vantage point than in Rogier's version, the abundantly detailed city and bay teem with travelers on foot, on horseback, and aboard ships.

Soon after its arrival in Naples, van Eyck's panel inspired an illumination in a splendid book of hours made for the king around 1455 (figure 3)¹⁵. Accompanying the office of Saint George, the illumination sets the knight in a verdant landscape outside a walled city that gives onto a port full of ships large and small. A creek and a road lead from distant background to immediate foreground, where George encounters the dragon, its tail looped menacingly around one of the horse's legs.

All three variations on van Eyck's composition — Rogier's tiny panel now in Washington, Nisart's altarpiece in Palma de Mallorca, and the illumination in Alfonso's book of hours in Naples — share a sweeping landscape of sky, sea, city, and rocky terrain, which travelers navigate on foot, on horseback, and by ship. All three imagine sites of departures, arrivals, and passages through the pictorial world. And all three compositions are structured around George's own passage through this imagined world, from city to wilderness.

This approach to the narrative of George and the dragon was new. Van Eyck surely knew illuminations of the subject in earlier fifteenth-century manuscripts: the Limbourg Brothers' *Belles Heures* for the Duke of Berry, made in the first decade of the fifteenth century (figure 4)¹⁶, for example, and a book of hours attributed to the Boucicaut Master and dated to around 1410-1415¹⁷. In both, the story is set in rocky terrain outside a castle, but the passage from foreground to background ends abruptly with a ornamental sky just beyond the middle ground. Instead, van Eyck imagined the picture to encompass a vast landscape, a deep and expansive view of earth, sky, and sea, with a port city perched on the edge of a coast. Other representations of George slaying the dragon set up a binary opposition between built town and the dragon's primitive cave dwelling; Donatello's narrative relief at Or San Michele, made around 1415, is just one example¹⁸. In the 1430s in Verona,

Pisanello showed George just arrived via ship in the threatened city, about to set out from town to wasteland to confront the dragon¹⁹. But Van Eyck depicted the traveling knight's journey itself, his passage from civilization to wilderness, from center to periphery. That journey took shape as a pictorial passage from deep distance to immediate foreground, and formed the narrative and pictorial spine of the composition.

Yet another copy of van Eyck's painting was made when it arrived in Naples in 1445. That copy is now known only from a letter that the Neapolitan humanist Pietro Summonte wrote in 1524 to Marcantonio Michiel in Venice to report on art, architecture, and antiquities in Naples²⁰. The letter offers a remarkably detailed description of a painting that Summonte appears to have known first hand.

Fo in costui una gran dextrezza in imitar quel che volea; la qual imitazione ipso avea tutta convertita in le cose di Fiandra, che allora sole erano in prezzo. Venne ad tempo suo da Fiandra la testa del duca Burgugna Carlo, ritratta assai bene dal naturale. Colantonio fe' opera che li fosse prestata dal mercante che la tenea; e, facta un'altra simile, tanto che non si potea discernere l'una dall'altra, rendio al patrone la nova che ipso avea facta di man sua, la quale lo mercante tenne per la sua propria, finché Colantonio li scoverse lo bello inganno. Similmente fe' dell'immagine di san Georgio, che venne pura da Fiandra, in tabula, in spacio di circa doi palmi e mezzo per banda delle quattro: opera assai laudata, dove si vede lo cavaleiro tutto inclinato incumbensque penitus in hastam, la qual ipso avea fixa nella bocca del dragone, e la punta, passata tutta in dentro, non avea da passare se non la pelle, che, già gonfiata, facea una certa borsa in fora. Era ad vedere il bon cavaleiro tanto dato avanti e sforzato contro il dragone, che la gamba dextra si vedea quasi fora della staffa e ipso già scosso dalla sella. In la sinistra gamba riverberava la immagine del dragone, così ben rappresentata in la luce delle arme come in vetro di specchio. In lo arcione della sella apparea una certa ruggia, la quale, in quel campo lucido di ferro, si mostrava molto evidente. Insomma la bon Colantonio la contrafece tutta questa pittura, di modo che non si discerneva la sua da l'archetipo se non in un albero, che in quella era di róvola e in questa costui ad bel studio lo volse fare di castagno. Questo tale ritratto adesso è in Napoli in la guardarobba della illustrissima signora duchessa di Milano. Lo ritratto del duca di Burgugna non è qua, lo quale dice olim averlo visto qua lo signor Iacomo Sannazaro nostro²¹.

In his description, Summonte focuses in particular on the figure of George, his complex and dynamic pose, the thrust of the lance, the reflection of the dragon in the polished surface of the knight's armor — as in a mirror, Summonte says — and the painter's capturing of the moment just before the lance pierces the dragon's skin opposite its point of entry. According to Summonte, like other paintings brought from Flanders to Naples by merchant ship, the *Saint George* was taken up by the painter Colantonio, a Neapolitan trained in the Flemish manner, who copied it so skillfully that one could not discern the copy from the original — except for a chestnut tree that Colantonio painted in place of the original's oak. The richness and specificity of Summonte's description suggests that he had studied

the picture from Flanders in person. And yet the discrepancy between the measurements of the panel of Saint George that Summonte records (about two and a half palms square) and the panel sent from Bruges to Naples (about four palms high by three wide) suggests either that van Eyck's picture had been cut down or that our writer is in fact describing Colantonio's copy, which Summonte says was kept in the apartments of Isabella of Aragon, the great granddaughter of Alfonso of Aragon. Whether Summonte knew both van Eyck's picture and Colantonio's *ritratto*, or whether only the *ritratto* was available to him, the slippage or ambiguity in Summonte's description of model and copy reinforces his claim for Colantonio's own skill in imitation, his «bello inganno»²². Below we will return to Summonte, whose letter launches the picture's historiographic career as an emblem of Naples as a nodal point in a network of artworks, people, and technologies in motion.

First, we return to summer 1445, by which time van Eyck's panel painting of *Saint George and the Dragon* had arrived in Naples. Three years earlier, in June 1442, Alfonso had wrested Naples from the French Angevin dynasty in a victory that the king attributed in part to the intervention of Saint George²³. Naples was the political, geographical, and ideological hinge between Alfonso's holdings in the western Mediterranean and his claims in the east, which included the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Duchy of Athens. Alfonso styled himself a warrior-scholar, a bringer of peace, and a new Roman emperor who would reunite the eastern and western halves of the empire. When it arrived in Naples in Summer 1445, van Eyck's panel painting joined Alfonso's growing collection of paintings, tapestries, textiles, metalwork, and other luxury goods from Northern Europe, which he collected voraciously²⁴. By 1456, when Alfonso commissioned his court historian and humanist Bartolomeo Fazio to write a book on the accomplishments of famous men including artists, the king had acquired Jan van Eyck's so-called Lomellini triptych, as well as a series of Passion tapestries or paintings on cloth designed by Rogier van der Weyden²⁵. Fazio also described a *mappamundi* that might in fact have been in Alfonso's possession in Naples and that was painted by none other than van Eyck: «a circular representation of the world, which he painted for Philip, Prince of the Belgians, and it is thought that no work has been done more perfectly in our time; you may distinguish in it not only places and the lie of continents but also, by measurement, the distances between places»²⁶.

Of all these acquisitions, however, the subject of the painting that Alfonso's agents had gone to such lengths to secure took on special significance in the context of Aragonese Naples²⁷. The kings of Aragon had long seen Saint George as patron and protector of their dynasty. They spent considerable energy, for example, attempting to gather the saint's relics²⁸. In 1370 Peter IV (r. 1336-1387)

acquired George's arm; he later received the other arm as a gift from the queen of Cyprus. For years, Martin I (r. 1396-1410), Alfonso's great uncle, tried to bring the relic of George's head from Greece, ultimately without success. Along with relics, cult practices and artistic programs manifested the dynasty's dedication to George as protector and intercessor.

Alfonso had captured Naples in 1442, thanks in part to the intervention of the Virgin, who had revealed to him in a dream that the city could be entered by way of a subterranean aqueduct. In gratitude for this victory he built the church of Santa Maria della Pace, which was furnished in 1444 with an altarpiece, now lost, by one of Alfonso's court painters, the Valencian Jacomart²⁹. But thanks were also due to Saint George. Adjacent to Santa Maria della Pace, according to the historian Giovanni Antonio Summonte, Alfonso dedicated a chapel to Saint George over the well out of which the king and his troops, carrying standards emblazoned with George's red cross on a white field, emerged from underground into the heart of the city³⁰. Every year Alfonso commemorated this victory with a procession from the Duomo to Santa Maria della Pace, a pageant that prominently featured members of the confraternity dedicated to Saint George³¹.

In Alfonso's Naples, Saint George appeared in court-commissioned art in a range of mediums, from manuscript illumination to panel painting to architectural sculpture. An entire page in Alfonso's book of hours was dedicated to the office of Saint George, illuminated with the miniature discussed above; the inclusion of this office suggests that George featured prominently in Alfonso's devotional practices. In 1447 Alfonso paid the painter Pierretto di Benvenuto to paint two frescoes in Santa Maria della Pace, one representing the story of Saint George and the princess as well as Saint Anthony, and the other the Virgin and Saint Michael³². The sculptural program of the arch at Castel Nuovo that commemorated Alfonso's triumphal entry into Naples included a now-fragmentary statue of Saint George, which was positioned along with Saints Michael and Anthony atop the tympanum³³. As has been recently and persuasively argued, Pisanello's panel painting of George, Anthony, and the Virgin now in the National Gallery in London might in fact have been a royal commission that functioned as a figuration of Alfonso himself (figure 5)³⁴. The Valencian painter Jacomart, while based at Alfonso's court in Naples, not only made the aforementioned altarpiece for Santa Maria della Pace but also painted George, along with the Virgin, on the stern of one of Alfonso's ships³⁵. Finally, one of the king's cannons was nicknamed, for good luck, Giorgio³⁶. Moving beyond Alfonso's own court, it has been proposed that his painting of Saint George by van Eyck inspired Leonello d'Este, who had married Alfonso's daughter Mary, to commission a painting of the same subject in Bruges in 1446,

which in turn informed Cosmè Tura's organ shutters at the cathedral of Ferrara³⁷.

It is especially significant that Saint George was represented in Naples in works that celebrated and commemorated Alfonso's arrival in the city: the frescoes at Santa Maria della Pace, founded to honor George and the Virgin for their intervention in Alfonso's military campaign; the chapel dedicated to George at the site of the well through which his troops gained access to the city; the arch at Castel Nuovo that represented and perpetuated the king's triumphal entry; and Pisanello's panel painting of patrons George, Anthony, and the Virgin. A silk military standard bearing the cross of Saint George for which Alfonso paid the embroiderer Antonello di Capua in December 1441 presumably accompanied Alfonso and his troops on their entry into the city the following June³⁸.

George was not only patron and protector of the Aragon dynasty but a facilitator in Alfonso's capture of Naples, just as the saint's intervention was credited for Latin crusaders' eleventh-century victory at Antioch³⁹. In fact, George's long-standing association with crusade would have been even more significant to Alfonso from the perspective of his strategic new position in Naples, long seen as a crucial point for defense against Islamic invasion and as a springboard for incursions east to reclaim the Holy Land⁴⁰. Indeed, in an illumination in a book of hours made for Alfonso in Valencia around 1440 and now held in the British Library, Alfonso in effect becomes George in a scene of battle against an army of «paganos» (figure 6)⁴¹. And one of the annual processions that celebrated Alfonso's capture of Naples featured not only members of the confraternity of Saint George but also eight men dressed as Turks and holding, in submission, standards with Saint George's cross⁴².

In light of the journey of Jan van Eyck's panel painting of *Saint George and the Dragon*, Alfonso's acquisition of the picture and its arrival in Naples took on a still more specific meaning. The picture's journey was Alfonso's. Carrying associations with the court of Burgundy, a model for Alfonso's own, the final leg of the panel's itinerary, from the eastern coast of Spain across the Mediterranean to Naples, retraced Alfonso's own passage to and capture of this prize territory, a campaign that had culminated in the king's arrival in the city with George's intervention and under the sign of his cross⁴³.

The painting's significance as an emblem of movement and arrival, moreover, was perhaps informed by its very pictorial structure, built around George's passage from background to foreground, from city to wasteland, and figuring departures, arrivals, and journey's through, into, and out of the imagined pictorial world. As for its subject, in van Eyck's *Saint George and the Dragon* the landscape was just as significant as the figure of the peripatetic knight himself. Voragine

had opened his life of George with an allegorical etymology of the saint's name. *George*, according to Voragine, derived from *geos*, or earth, and *orge*, to work — thus, one who works the earth, that is, his human flesh. In this interpretation the saint is identified with mountains, hills, and fields, and the fruits of these different terrains symbolized his virtues⁴⁴.

In sum, our painting's subject, pictorial structure, and physical transport from Bruges to Valencia and Barcelona to Naples intertwined to generate meaning when it arrived at Alfonso's newly established Neapolitan court in Summer 1445. In this regard it is not insignificant that in the earliest known variation that van Eyck's painting inspired, the picture was understood to have the potential to move: in his Washington panel, Rogier reconceived van Eyck's composition on a truly portable scale, an object the size of a postcard meant to be held in the hand and perhaps even carried on the body—like the painted shield at the crux of the composition, an image-bearing object in motion across space.

This same past and potential movement informed the historiographic afterlife of Jan van Eyck's *Saint George and the Dragon* in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. After Pietro Summonte described the painting and Colantonio's copy in 1524, the location and fate of van Eyck's picture is undocumented. But it soon took on another life in the early art historical literature, in which van Eyck's painting was bound up in real and imagined networks of artworks, people, and artistic technologies in circulation throughout the Mediterranean, a historiography informed by the memory of the painting's mobility.

Within the broader historical context that Summonte sketched out in his 1524 letter, van Eyck's painting of Saint George and its passage from Flanders to Naples becomes an emblem of the story of art in Naples as one of movement, adaptation, and rupture — as distinct from the already well-rehearsed narrative, with which Summonte demonstrates he is familiar, of the rebirth of art in Florence and its radiation outward from center to periphery, a narrative of unbroken chains of masters and pupils and of personal style linked to place⁴⁵. According to Summonte, Naples could boast no great master, local or foreign, until «maestro Colantonio nostro napolitano,» skilled in painting in the Flemish technique («in lavoro di Fiandra e lo colorire di quel paese») and trained by the painter-king René of Anjou himself⁴⁶. Colantonio's great talent, Summonte claims, was evident in his ability to complete or replicate Flemish paintings so skillfully that his intervention was undetectable. To a panel painting of Christ Resurrected that had come from Flanders and that Summonte records in Santa Maria Nova in Naples, Colantonio added two angels «con tanta similitudine di vista, di lavoro, di carnatura, di color e della tela della quale stanno vestute le figure, che ciascuno è costretto pensare sia

tutto fatto per una mano»⁴⁷. Merchants brought to Naples a portrait of the Duke of Burgundy, which Colantonio copied with such skill that nobody, including the merchants themselves, could discern the original from the copy until «Colantonio li scorse lo bello inganno»⁴⁸. Likewise his copy of van Eyck's painting of Saint George: «[Colantonio] contrafece tutta questa pittura, di modo che non si discernea la sua da l'archetipo se non in un albero, che in quella era di róvola e in questa costui ad bel studio lo volse fare di castagno»⁴⁹.

Thus, eighty years after its arrival in Naples, van Eyck's panel painting of Saint George was still caught up, in Summonte's account, in a network of paintings and people in motion, a web in which Naples figures as a point of convergence and adaptation—and even trickery, in which Colantonio copies paintings by van Eyck so successfully that he proves himself as his Flemish colleague's equal. Moreover, Summonte's narrative is one not of continuous chains of transfer between masters and pupils, but of rupture. Artists from elsewhere come to the city to work at court, only to scatter when rulers are overthrown⁵⁰. Giotto's great frescoes in Castel Nuovo are plastered over by «those of poor judgement»⁵¹. Colantonio himself dies young, his art only brought to perfection by his pupil Antonello da Messina⁵². Indeed, Colantonio's death is only one of a series of disasters and losses that in Summonte's account befell the arts in Naples: the great library of the Aragons is dispersed by Florentine merchants, for example, and «lo povero artefice Gasparo,» in his great «ingegno,» takes up architecture, only to tumble to his death from a building under construction⁵³.

Key elements in Summonte's account—the arrival of a Flemish painting in Naples by way of merchant ship, the admiration and emulation it inspires there, and the desire to learn the secrets of Netherlandish technique—reappear in Giorgio Vasari's biography of Antonello da Messina and the dramatic narrative of the invention of painting in oil and the transfer of the technique from Flanders to Italy⁵⁴. In fact, the pivotal role of the arrival of a Flemish painting in Naples in both Summonte and Vasari raises the question of whether Vasari somehow knew Summonte's letter to Michiel either directly or through an intermediary. In any case, in Vasari's account the arrival in Naples of a painting by van Eyck sets off another series of journeys and a resulting transfer of technical knowledge⁵⁵. According to Vasari, van Eyck's discovery of a technique of painting with oil—a medium that withstood time, handling, and variations in climate—made him famous throughout the world. But even though merchants carried van Eyck's paintings near and far, other artists could not reverse-engineer the panels' method of production. A turning point comes with the arrival of a painting by van Eyck in Naples.

But certain Florentines, who traded between Flanders and Naples, sent to King Alfonso I of Na-

ples a panel with many figures painted in oil by Johann, which became very dear to that King both for the beauty of the figures and for the novel invention shown in the colouring; and all the painters in that kingdom flocked together to see it, and it was consummately extolled by all⁵⁶.

Antonello da Messina traveled from his native Sicily to Naples, Vasari continues, studied the picture, and from there continued on to Flanders where he learned the new technique directly from van Eyck. In turn, Antonello traveled back to Italy — first to Messina and then to Venice — where he made many paintings that were to be found throughout Venice and beyond⁵⁷.

In his account, Vasari does not describe the painting that arrived at Alfonso's court or identify its subject. It is sometimes assumed to be the Lomellini triptych that Fazio had described, but it is just as likely that Vasari had learned of the story of the journey of van Eyck's panel painting of Saint George from Bruges to Naples, and adapted it as a set piece in his life of Antonello. In fact, that the story of van Eyck's invention of oil painting was associated with the subject of Saint George right through the sixteenth century is demonstrated in the engraving *Color Olivi* from the *Nova Reperta* series designed in Florence in the 1580s and 1590s by Johannes Stradanus, one of Vasari's closest protégés (fig. 7). Here, Jan stands at the center of his bustling studio, palette and brushes in hand, at work on a large-scale painting (on canvas, this time) of Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon⁵⁸.

By the early seventeenth century, Vasari's account had made its way to Naples and there provoked a vigorous response. For a series of Neapolitan historians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the story of a painting by van Eyck that had traveled from Bruges to Naples became a way to define the history of painting in that city in terms of local and foreign, and to claim its primacy over Florence, Venice, and other centers. As Borchert and Huvenne have pointed out, in the sixteenth century Summonte had already begun to put forth Colantonio as an agent of the introduction of the oil painting technique to Italy—it was Colantonio after all, according to Summonte, who taught Antonello⁵⁹. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a series of Neapolitan writers used the life of Colantonio and the arrival of van Eyck's painting in Naples to claim the city's primacy in the practice of oil painting⁶⁰.

In his *Napoli Sacra* of 1623, Cesare d'Engenio responded directly to Vasari's account of the introduction of oil painting to Italy⁶¹. In a description of Colantonio's paintings of Saint Francis and Saint Jerome in the church of San Lorenzo Maggiore, d'Engenio contends that despite the claims of «i Pittori forastieri,» Naples's own Colantonio was the first to discover and practice the technique of oil painting. Other writers give all the fame and glory to the Lombards and Sicilians, d'Engenio laments, obscuring the fame of the Neapolitans. Camillo Tutini

followed d'Engenio, with the added barb that these «pittori lombardi» celebrate only their own painters, who don't even know how to hold a paintbrush and are more whitewashers than painters⁶².

The arrival in Naples of a painting by van Eyck had disappeared from d'Engenio's account, but reappeared in 1682 in Carlo Celano's *Notitie del bello, dell'antico e del curioso della città di Napoli*. Building on d'Engenio and responding directly to Vasari, Celano does his own reckoning with the dates in order to argue that Colantonio was painting in oil in Naples before van Eyck's painting ever arrived in the city⁶³. Celano short-circuits, in effect, the network of people, artworks, and knowledge that Summonte had begun to sketch and that Vasari had dramatized, and instead roots the invention of oil painting firmly in Naples. Several decades later, in his *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti napoletani* of 1742-1745, Bernardo de' Dominici would follow Celano's claim that Colantonio painted in oil before the arrival in Naples of a painting by van Eyck⁶⁴.

The story of the picture appeared yet again in 1700 in Domenico Antonio Parrino's *De' pittori, scultori, architetti, miniatori e ricamatori napolitani e regnicoli*. For the first time since Summonte's letter in 1524, the anecdote is associated with a specific artwork known to the writer—but this time, in a final twist, with a painting of a different subject altogether. In a passage on Colantonio's painting of Saint Jerome at San Lorenzo Maggiore, Parrino reiterates the claims of earlier writers that the Neapolitan was the first to paint in oil⁶⁵. More interesting, however, is Parrino's description of the chapel of Saint Barbara at Castel Nuovo, in which he records a painting of the Presentation of the Magi⁶⁶. Curiously, two of the magi, Parrino says, are portraits of Alfonso and his son Ferdinando. What's more, Parrino reports that according to Vasari this picture of the magi was the first oil painting by Jan van Eyck to be sent to Alfonso in Naples—while other people, he notes, claim that it was a painting of the same subject in Mergellina. The subject of the painting to which Parrino reassigns the old story is perhaps not insignificant: the Presentation of the Magi is essentially about the passage of people and gifts across space and their arrival in the presence of a new king.

In Parrino, the threads of the story of the arrival of a painting by van Eyck in Naples are here unwoven and rewoven almost beyond recognition. We are far, now, from the painting made on oak panel, carefully packed in a crate and transported by pack saddle and by ship from Bruges to Valencia, from Valencia to Barcelona, and from Barcelona on to Naples. But even in this short passage, in its adaptation of past accounts, we find threads that run right through the long history of Jan van Eyck's *Saint George and the Dragon* between Bruges and Naples, both its actual travels and its historiographic afterlife: a painting about people and things in

motion, the peregrinations of the picture itself and its subject brought into alignment with one of its first owners, claims to historical primacy, the complication and even trickery of copies and multiples, and the persistence of the memory of a picture's past and potential movement across space.

- * Il saggio traccia la storia di un dipinto su tavola di Jan Van Eyck raffigurante San Giorgio e il drago, inviato via mare da Bruges, attraverso Valencia e Barcellona, a Napoli dove arrivò nell'estate del 1445 presso la corte aragonese da poco insediatasi in città. Attraverso uno studio ravvicinato delle evidenze materiali e testuali che il dipinto, oggi perduto, ha lasciato nel suo itinerario, il saggio segue le tappe di un oggetto in movimento, viaggiando dentro una rete reale e immaginaria di persone, opere d'arte e tecniche artistiche. Tale movimento attraverso lo spazio, sia quello reale sia quello di cui resta memoria, ha innescato una serie di significati al suo arrivo a Napoli nel 1445, in particolare in riferimento all'itinerario politico proprio di Alfonso, dalla Spagna all'Italia, sino alla presa di Napoli che il re attribuiva in parte a San Giorgio. Il saggio avanza altresì l'ipotesi che il suo significato, e la sua immediata ricezione nell'ambiente della corte napoletana, fossero guidati dal soggetto stesso dell'opera e dal modo in cui questo era costruito. Infine, il saggio prova a dimostrare come tutti questi aspetti dell'opera avessero condizionato anche la sua ricezione all'interno della letteratura artistica sul tema, in costante aggiornamento, dell'invenzione della pittura a olio e delle dinamiche artistiche tra Napoli, l'Italia e il Nord Europa.
- 1 On van Eyck's lost painting and for further bibliography see S. F. Jones, *Jan van Eyck and Spain*, in «Boletín del Museo del Prado», 22, 2014, pp. 30-49, esp. pp. 30-34; C. Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli: committenza artistica, politica, diplomazia al tempo di Alfonso il Magnanimo e Filippo il Buono*, Roma, 2012, pp. 24-25, 46-51, 145-146; R. Cornudella, *Alfonso el Magnánimo y Jan van Eyck: Pintura y tapices flamencos en la corte del rey de Aragón*, in «LOCVS AMOENVS», 10, 2009-2010, pp. 39-62, esp. pp. 49-54; *The Age of Van Eyck: The Mediterranean World and Early Netherlandish Painting 1430-1530*, exhibition catalogue (Brugge, 2002), ed. by T.-H. Borchert, Gent, 2002, esp. the essays by A. Beyer (pp. 118-127) and T.-H. Borchert and P. Huvenne (pp. 220-224); L. Campbell, *Cosmè Tura and Netherlandish Art*, in *Cosmè Tura: Painting and Design in Renaissance Ferrara*, exhibition catalogue (Boston, 2002), ed. by S. J. Campbell, Boston, 2002, pp. 71-105, esp. pp. 93-99; F. Elsig, cat. no. 27 in *El renacimiento mediterráneo. Viajes de artistas e itinerarios de obras: entre Italia, Francia y España en el siglo XV*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid-Valencia, 2001), ed. by M. Natale, Madrid, 2001; P. H. Jolly, *Jan van Eyck and St. Jerome: A Study of Eyckian Influence on Colantonio and Antonello da Messina in Quattrocento Naples*, PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1976, pp. 7-8, 31-32, 98-99; C. Pemán y Pemartín, *Juan van Eyck y España*, Cadiz, 1969, pp. 37-39; R. Weiss, *Jan van Eyck and the Italians I*, in «Italian Studies», 11, 1956, pp. 1-15, esp. pp. 11-13, 15; G. Hulin de Loo, *Quelques notes de voyage*, in «Académie royale de Belgique, Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts», 7, 1925, pp. 100-106. For a particularly rich study of the reception of Flemish painting in Italy, with focus on Florence, see P. Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence*, New Haven and London, 2004.
 - 2 See, for example, the essays gathered in *Import/Export: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in the Kingdom of Naples, 1266-1713*, ed. by J. Elliott and C. Warr, Oxford, 2008 (special issue of «Art History», 31, 4).
 - 3 For the treasury documents see Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli*, cit., pp. 145-146, and for

Alfonso's letter see Weiss, *Jan van Eyck and the Italians I*, cit., p. 15. I am grateful to Victoria Muñoz (City University of New York) for her translation of the treasury documents into English for the first time.

- 4 On Alfonso's relationship with Gregori and Mercader see Jones, *Jan van Eyck and Spain*, cit., pp. 30-31, which draws on an unpublished lecture by Lorne Campbell. For the document of 2 March 1444 see Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli*, cit., p. 145, doc. 13. Translation below by Victoria Muñoz; notes in brackets are hers. «Payment by Pere Garro to Johan Gregori, merchant citizen of Valencia, 2,144 royal *sous* for the following reasons: 2,000 for the purchase, by my ordinance, of an oak wood panel of the height of four palms [a unit of measure roughly equivalent to between 8 and 9 inches] and a width of three, on which is painted and elaborated by the hand of the master Johannes, the great painter of the famous Duke of Burgundy, the image of Saint George on horseback and other motifs very skillfully fashioned, and 144 *sous* for the price of four very fine *charamites* [a type of wind instrument], purchased in the same way and which, like the said panel, must be sent to the Lord King, in the kingdom of Naples. As in the past, the said Johan Gregori, in order to serve the said Lord, had these purchases made in Bruges, costing altogether 2,144 *sous*. Set forth the 2 March of the present year 1444 and followed by the Lord King's illustrious hand».
- 5 For the relative magnitude of the 2,000 *sous* that Alfonso paid for the picture, see Jones, *Jan van Eyck and Spain*, cit., p. 48, n. 7.
- 6 See Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli*, cit., p. 145, doc. 14. Translation below by Victoria Muñoz; notes in brackets are hers. «Payment by Pere Garro to Pere Domingo, packer of the city of Valencia, 40 *sous* 8 *deniers* for the following reasons: First, 32 *sous* 8 *deniers*, which by my command and order have been paid for the following things: 12 *sous* for the price of 6 canvases used to cover the six bundles which had been made of 50 caparisons, and two crates, in one of which there is an image of Saint George and in the other four *charamites*. Item, 1 *sous* 4 *deniers* for the price of 8 hemp ropes to bind the said 6 bundles; item, 10 *sous* 4 *deniers* for the price of three ells [a unit of measure, usually used for textiles, designating about 45 inches of material] of white linen to cover the said crates; item, 6 *sous* for the price of three pounds of cotton to pack the said panel of Saint George in the said crate; item, 2 *sous* for the price of 8 pounds of hemp oakum to stuff the said *charamites*. Item, 8 *deniers* for thread to sew the said bundles; and 8 *sous* for the salary and labor of 2 companions to untie and unpack the 3 bundles which had been made of the said 50 caparisons. Also for the packing and binding to make 6 bundles of the said three bundles, because they were too heavy to transport, each one weighing more than 13 *arrobas* [a unit of weight equal to about 9.5 kilograms], and which have been transported to Barcelona to be loaded onto the ship *Negróna* that was to conduct them, together with other things, to the Lord King in the Kingdom of Naples. The said quantities sum up to the said 40 *sous* 8 *deniers*. Set forth the 22 August of the present year 1444 and followed by the King's illustrious hand».
- 7 Weiss, *Jan van Eyck and the Italians I*, cit., p. 11, n. 66.
- 8 See Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli*, cit., p. 146, doc. 15. Translation below by Victoria Muñoz. «Payment by Pere Garro to Bart Piles, shore runner of the city of Valencia, 41 *sous* for the wages and rental of four pack saddles, which by my ordinance and commandment are rented to transport from the city of Valencia to Barcelona six bundles made of the caparisons and two crates, in which is placed in one a panel in which is figured and painted in various colors the image of Saint George and in the other four *charamites*; to gather together and load those said bundles and crates in the ship that was to be dispatched from the sea of the said city of Barcelona so to thereby transport the said bundles and crates to the Lord King

in the kingdom of Naples. Set forth the 10th of September of this year 1444 and followed by the Lord King's illustrious hand».

- 9 See the transcription of the document in Weiss, *Jan van Eyck and the Italians I*, cit., p. 15.
- 10 For an overview of this group of variations on van Eyck's *Saint George and the Dragon* and for a convincing argument for a common Eyckian model, see Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli*, cit., pp. 24-25, 46-51.
- 11 Rogier van der Weyden, *Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1430-1435, oil on panel, 15.2 x 11.8 cm (overall), Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1966.1.1. For an introduction to the Washington panel, including its condition, history of attribution, and further bibliography, see *Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, exhibition catalogue (Washington, D.C.-Antwerp, 2006-2007), ed. by J. O. Hand, C. A. Metzger, and R. Spronk, New Haven, 2006, cat. no. 36; Elsig, cat. no. 27 in *El renacimiento mediterráneo*, cit.; and J. O. Hand and M. Wolff, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Systematic Catalogue of the Collections of the National Gallery of Art*, Washington, D.C. and Cambridge, 1986.
- 12 Rogier van der Weyden, *Virgin and Child Enthroned*, c. 1430-1435, oil on panel, 15.8 x 11.4 cm (overall), Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, inv. no. 435 (1930.125). The Thyssen and Washington pictures share the same dimensions and a vertical crack that formed before the single panel was separated into two. On the Thyssen panel see C. Eisler, *The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection: Early Netherlandish Painting*, London, 1989, cat. no. 4.
- 13 Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. W. G. Ryan, Princeton, 1993, vol. 1, pp. 238-242. Born in Cappadocia and martyred around 300 at Lydda, George is almost entirely accrued legend, and it is perhaps for this reason that he was particularly malleable, taken up in texts and images across geography and culture. On the cult, legend, and iconography of Saint George see C. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, Aldershot, 2003, pp. 109-144; Idem, *The Origins of the Cult of Saint George*, in «Revue des études byzantines», 53, 1995, pp. 295-326; and G. Didi-Huberman, *Saint Georges et le dragon: versions d'une légende*, Paris, 1994.
- 14 Pedro Nisart, *Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1468, Palma de Mallorca, Museo y Catedral de Mallorca. On the Nisart panel see Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli*, cit., pp. 48-50, and Pemán y Pemartín, *Juan van Eyck y España*, cit., pp. 37-39. Challéat also proposes a second possible scenario in which Nisart learned of van Eyck's painting not as a result of its short stay in Valencia but after it had arrived in Naples, the composition echoing back to Valencia by way of painters or artworks that traveled between the two cities. Yet another possibility is that the Valencian painter Lluís Dalmau, court artist to Alfonso of Aragon, studied the painting when he traveled to the Netherlands in the early 1430s.
- 15 Neapolitan, *Book of Hours of Alfonso of Aragon*, c. 1455, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, ms. I.B.55, f. 214r. See G. Toscano, cat. no. 61 in *El renacimiento mediterráneo*, cit.
- 16 The Limbourg Brothers, *Belles Heures of Jean de France, duc de Berry*, c. 1405-1410, tempera, gold, and ink on vellum, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, inv. no. 54.1.1a, b, f. 167r.
- 17 Boucicaut Master, *Book of Hours*, c. 1410-1415, Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, ms. 2, f. 23v.
- 18 Donatello, *Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1415, marble relief below sculpture of Saint George, originally for the façade of Orsanmichele, now Florence, Bargello.
- 19 Pisanello, *Saint George and the Princess*, 1430s, fresco, Verona, church of Sant'Anastasia.
- 20 For the text of Summonte's letter along with commentary see F. Nicolini, *L'Arte Napoletana*

del Rinascimento e la lettera di Pietro Summonte a Marcantonio Michiel, Napoli, 1925.

- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.
- 22 Cornudella suggests a third alternative, that Summonte is describing another Flemish painting of Saint George altogether, distinct from the one documented en route from Bruges to Naples in the 1440s (Cornudella, *Alfonso el Magnánimo y Jan van Eyck*, cit., pp. 49-54). In this regard it should be noted that Summonte never names van Eyck as painter of the panel «da Fiandra». And yet it seems rather unlikely that two such important pictures of Saint George (van Eyck's panel so meticulously documented en route to Naples and a second given such prominence in Summonte's account) had traveled by merchant ship from Flanders to Naples in the same years.
- 23 On Alfonso of Aragon in Naples see J. H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*, Princeton, 1987, and A. Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples Under Alfonso the Magnanimous: The Making of a Modern State*, Oxford, 1976.
- 24 On Alfonso of Aragon and northern art, and for further bibliography, see Challéat, *Dalle Fiandre a Napoli*, cit.; Cornudella, *Alfonso el Magnánimo y Jan van Eyck*, cit.; M. Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance: Burgundian Arts across Europe*, Cambridge and New York, 2002, pp. 179-194; *The Age of Van Eyck*, cit.; *El renacimiento mediterráneo*, cit.; F. Bologna, *Napoli e le rotte mediterranee della pittura: da Alfonso il Magnanimo a Ferdinando il Cattolico*, Napoli, 1977; Jolly, *Jan van Eyck and St. Jerome*, cit.; M. Baxandall, *Bartholomaeus Facius on Painting: A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of the De Viris Illustribus*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 27, 1964, pp. 90-107; and Weiss, *Jan van Eyck and the Italians I*, cit.
- 25 Baxandall, *Bartholomaeus Facius on Painting*, cit., pp. 102-103 for the biography of Jan van Eyck and pp. 104-107 for the biography of Rogier van der Weyden. It should be noted that in his biography of van Eyck, Fazio does not mention the painting of Saint George, either because he did not know it or because he deemed the Lomellini triptych more important to mention in the context of his short biography. On the Lomellini Triptych see M. C. Galassi, *Jan van Eyck's Genoese Commissions: The Lost Triptych of Battista Lomellini*, in *Van Eyck Studies: Papers Presented at the Eighteenth Symposium for the Study of Underdrawing and Technology in Painting, Brussels, 19-21 September 2012*, ed. by C. Currie, B. Fransen, V. Henderiks, C. Stroo, and D. Vanwijnsberghe, Paris, Leuven, and Bristol, CT, 2017, pp. 480-493. Susan Frances Jones has proposed the possibility that the pair of panels depicting the Crucifixion and the Last Judgement now at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and attributed to van Eyck and his studio were already present in Naples in the fifteenth century. See Jones, *Jan van Eyck and Spain*, cit., pp. 37-43.
- 26 Baxandall, *Bartholomaeus Facius on Painting*, cit., p. 102. For the proposal that Philip the Good gave the *mappamundi* as a gift to Alfonso of Aragon see M. Belozerskaya, *Jan van Eyck's Lost mappamundi — A Token of Fifteenth-Century Power Politics*, in «Journal of Early Modern History», 4, 2000, 1, pp. 45-84.
- 27 On the significance of Saint George in Naples under Alfonso of Aragon see J. Barreto, *Une peinture de Pisanello à Naples? Hypothèse pour la Vierge à l'Enfant avec saint Antoine et Saint Georges*, in «Studiolo», 10, 2013, pp. 193-212; J. Molina Figueras, *Contra Turcos: Alfonso d'Aragona e la retorica visiva della crociata*, in *La battaglia nel Rinascimento meridionale*, ed. by G. Abbamonte, Roma, 2001, pp. 97-110; and G. Vitale, *Ritualità monarchica: cerimonie e pratiche devozionali nella Napoli aragonese*, Napoli, 2006, pp. 197-210.
- 28 See A. Torra Pérez, *Reyes, santos y reliquias: Aspectos de la sacralidad de la monarquía catalano-aragonesa*, in *El poder real de la Corona de Aragón (siglos XIV-XVII)*, Zaragoza, 1996, vol.

- 3, pp. 493-517, and K. M. Setton, *Saint George's Head*, in «Speculum», 48, 1973, 1, pp. 5-9.
- 29 C. Minieri Riccio, *Alcuni fatti di Alfonso I di Aragona dal 15 aprile 1437 al 31 maggio 1458*, in «Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane», 6, 1881, 1, pp. 1-36, 231-258, and 411-461, here pp. 243-244.
- 30 G. A. Summonte, *Historia della città e regno di Napoli*, Napoli, 1601-1643, vol. 4, p. 257. The site is now encompassed by the church of the Santissima Annunziata and its adjacent hospital.
- 31 On the procession see Figueras, *Contra Turcos*, cit., p. 104, and Minieri Riccio, *Alcuni fatti*, cit., pp. 417-418.
- 32 Minieri Riccio, *Alcuni fatti*, cit., p. 454.
- 33 See G. Hersey, *The Aragonese Arch at Naples 1443-1475*, New Haven, 1973, fig. 111. The foundational studies of Alfonso's triumphal arch are C. von Fabriczy, *Der Triumphbogen Alphonsos I am Castel Nuovo zu Neapel*, in «Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen», 20, 1899, pp. 3-30, 125-158; R. Filangieri, *L'Arco trionfale di Alfonso d'Aragona*, in «Dedalo», 12, 1932, pp. 439-466, 594-626; Hersey, *The Aragonese Arch*, cit.; and H.-W. Kruft and M. Mal-manger, *Der Triumphbogen Alfonsos in Neapel. Das Monument und seine politische Bedeutung*, in «Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia», 6, 1975, pp. 213-305.
- 34 Pisanello, *Virgin and Child with Saints Anthony and George*, tempera on poplar, 46.5 x 29 cm, London, National Gallery, inv. no. NG776. Barreto proposes the London panel as «une projection symbolique du roi Alphonse» (Barreto, *Une peinture de Pisanello à Naples*, cit., p. 196).
- 35 Barreto, *Une peinture de Pisanello à Naples*, cit., p. 194 and p. 208, n. 20.
- 36 Minieri Riccio, *Alcuni fatti*, cit., p. 247.
- 37 Campbell, *Cosmè Tura and Netherlandish Art*, cit., pp. 93-99.
- 38 Minieri Riccio, *Alcuni fatti*, cit., p. 28.
- 39 Mentioned in George's biography in Voragine, *Golden Legend*, cit., p. 242.
- 40 On Alfonso and crusade see Figueras, *Contra Turcos*, cit.; Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*, cit., pp. 161-162; A. Ryder, *The Eastern Policy of Alfonso the Magnanimous*, in «Atti della Accademia Pontaniana», 28, 1979, pp. 7-27; and Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples*, cit., pp. 290-305.
- 41 As Joana Barreto has shown in Barreto, *Une peinture de Pisanello à Naples*, cit., p. 194. Valencian, *Book of Hours of Alfonso of Aragon*, c. 1436-1443, London, British Library, ms. 28962, f. 78r.
- 42 Minieri Riccio, *Alcuni fatti*, cit., p. 417.
- 43 With regard to the relationship between Alfonso's court in Naples and the court of Burgundy, it is not insignificant that the Burgundian dukes also invoked George as a protector and agent of their military victories. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of the present article for pointing out this parallel.
- 44 Voragine, *Golden Legend*, cit., p. 238.
- 45 Nicolini, *La lettera di Pietro Summonte*, cit., pp. 158-159.
- 46 For Summonte's account of Colantonio see *ibid.*, pp. 160-163.
- 47 *Ibid.*, cit., p. 161.

- 48 *Ibid.*, cit., p. 162.
- 49 *Ibid.*
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- 53 *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.
- 54 G. Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects* by Giorgio Vasari, trans. G. du C. De Vere, London, 1912-1914, vol. 3, pp. 59-64. On Vasari's account of the transfer of the oil technique from Flanders to Italy as a drama of the dynamics between the local (Florence) and the foreign see also D. Young, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Mobility, and Style*, New Haven and London, 2014, pp. 30-33, 109-111.
- 55 Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters*, cit., pp. 60-63.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- 57 Karel van Mander subsequently relayed Vasari's account in abbreviated form, this time in a life of Jan and Hubert van Eyck. See K. van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, trans. by H. Miedema, Doornspijk, 1994, vol. 1, p. 66.
- 58 On the *Color Olivi* engraving from Stradanus's *Nova Reperta* see L. Davis, *Renaissance Inventions: Van Eyck's Workshop as a Site of Discovery and Transformation in Jan van der Straet's "Nova Reperta"*, in «Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek», 59, 2009, pp. 222-247.
- 59 T.-H. Borchert and P. Huvenne, *Van Eyck and the Invention of Oil Painting: Artistic Merits in their Literary Mirror*, in *The Age of Van Eyck*, cit., pp. 220-224.
- 60 For the reception of Colantonio and other early Neapolitan painters in the eighteenth-century literature and in early nineteenth-century collecting practices see G. Toscano, *La réception des primitifs à Naples du XVIIIe siècle à la domination française (1806-1815) et l'expérience d'Aubin-Louis Millin*, in *La Collection Cacault: Italie-Nantes, 1810-2010*, ed. by B. Chavanne, C. Georgel, and H. Rousteau-Chambon, Paris, 2016, pp. 2-23, especially pp. 2-5 for an overview of the earlier literature. See also Cornudella on the notes of Massimo Stanzione as a response to Vasari: Cornudella, *Alfonso el Magnánimo y Jan van Eyck*, cit., pp. 53-54.
- 61 C. D'Engenio, *Napoli Sacra*, Napoli, 1623, p. 111: «In questa cappella è la tavola, dentrovi San Francesco, e San Girolamo in atto di studiare tanto al naturale, che paiono vivi, il tutto fù opera di Colantonio. Illustre pittor Napoletano, e fù il primo, che ritrovò in Nap. il colorir ad oglio, contro quello che dicono i Pittori forastieri, in quali tengono il contrario, e tutta la fama, & gloria attribuiscono alli Lombardi, e Siciliani alzandoli alle stelle, occultando, e diminuendo la fama de' Napolitani, e Regnicoli à i quali veramente si deve l'honore di questa inventione, & la palma di quest'arte. Fiori questo valent'huom ne gli anni di Christo 1436».
- 62 O. Morisani, *Letteratura Artistica a Napoli tra il '400 e il '600*, Napoli, 1954, pp. 114-144, esp. p. 117: «Un altro Col Antonio, pittore celebre napoletano, che fiorì nel 1436. Abbiamo che fu il primo che inventò di colorire ad oglio contra quello che dicono i pittori lombardi, et altri, li quali pensano di oscurare la gloria de' famosi pittori Napoletani e Regnicoli, e fanno pompa ne' loro scritti con celebrare alcuni loro pittori nazionali, che non sapeano tenere né il lapis né il pennello in mano, che piuttosto sembravano imbiancatori che pittori».
- 63 See *Giornata Seconda* in C. Celano, *Notitie del bello, dell'antico e del curioso della città di Napoli per i signori forastieri date dal canonico Carlo Celano napoletano, divise in dieci giornate*, Napoli, 1692, ed. by S. De Mieri and F. De Rosa, 2010, *Memofonte*, <<http://www.memofonte.it>>

[it/ricerche/napoli.html](http://www.memofonte.it/ricerche/napoli.html)>, p. 41: «Nell'istessa parte si vede una picciola tavola, nella quale sta dipinto San Girolamo in atto di studiare, opera veramente ammirabile di Col'Antonio de Fiore napoletano, che fu il primo a dipingere ad oglio nell'anno 1436, contro quello che si scrive dal Vasari che dice che fu mandato un quadro ad Alfonso Primo re di Napoli da Giovanni di Brugia fiamengo dipinto ad oglio, e che Antonello da Messina ammiratosi di questo nuovo modo di dipingere, desideroso di sapere il segreto, si portò in Fiandra, e doppo qualche tempo lo seppe da un allievo di Giovanni. Da Fiandra tornò in Italia, e passato in Venetia, ivi, come dice il Ridolfi, che scrive le vite de' dipintori venetiani e dello Stato, Giovanni Bellini seppe con astutia il segreto; scrivendo ancora che per prima l'avesse Antonello comunicato ad un tal maestro Domenico. Hor si concordino i tempi. Col'Antonio nell'anno 1436 dipingeva ad oglio. Alfonso alli due di luglio dell'anno 1433 prese Napoli per l'acquedotto, et è da supponersi che non in questo tempo li fusse stato presentato il quadro del Brugia, ma in qualche tempo doppo presa Napoli, et Antonello nell'andare e tornare vi pose anco tempo; dal che chiaramente si raccoglie, per quel che dice il Vasari, che più di dieci anni prima Col'Antonio dipingeva ad oglio. Si prova più chiaramente l'ultimo quadro che fece Giovanni Bellini, che lasciò imperfetto, fu nell'anno 1514. Visse quest'artefice 90 anni, dal che si ricava che egli nacque nell'anno 1424. Quando hebbe egli il segreto da Antonello dice l'autore della sua vita che egli era molto stimato in Italia, e si può supporre che almeno fusse di 30 anni, dunque nel 1454 cominciò a dipingere ad oglio. Oltre che nella vita dell'istesso Bellini si dice che circa il 1490 avesse principiato a dipingere in questa maniera. Dallo che si ricava che il primo ch'avesse operato ad oglio fusse stato il nostro Col'Antonio nell'anno 1436, come si disse».

- 64 See the life of Colantonio in B. de' Dominici, *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti napoletani*, ed. by F. Sricchia Santoro and A. Zezza, Napoli, 2003, pp. 231-251.
- 65 D. A. Parrino, *Napoli città nobilissima, antica e fedelissima, esposta agli occhi et alla mente de' curiosi. Parte Prima*, Napoli, 1700, ed. by P. Santucci and F. Loffredo, 2007, *Memofonte*, <<http://www.memofonte.it/ricerche/napoli.html>>, vol. 1, p. 120: «Un San Girolamo di Cola Antonio di Fiore, dicono il primo che pingesse ad oglio nell'anno 1436, contravertito dal Vassari.»
- 66 Parrino, *Napoli città nobilissima*, cit., vol. 1, p. 28: «Èvvi un quadro della Presentazione de' Maggi, due de' quali hanno l'imagini d'Alfonso I e Ferdinando, e si dice che sia la prima tavola dipinta ad oglio di Giovanni da Bruggia inviata ad Alfonso, come dice il Vasari, benché altri vogliono sia la Presentazione che sta a Mergellina».



Fig. 1: Rogier van der Weyden, *Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1430-1435, oil on panel, 15.2 x 11.8 cm (overall). Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1966.1.1. Photo credit: Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



Fig. 2: Pedro Nisart, *Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1468. Palma de Mallorca, Museo y Catedral de Mallorca. Photo credit: Artwork in the public domain.



Fig. 3: Neapolitan illuminator, *Book of Hours of Alfonso of Aragon*, c. 1455. Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, ms. I.B.55, f. 214r. Photo credit: ©Archivio dell'arte | Pedicini Fotografi.



Fig. 4: The Limbourg Brothers, *Belles Heures of Jean de France, duc de Berry*, c. 1405-1410, tempera, gold, and ink on vellum. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, inv. no. 54.1.1a, b, f. 167r. Photo credit: Licensed for use under a Creative Commons agreement.



Fig. 5: Pisanello, *Virgin and Child with Saints Anthony and George*, tempera on poplar, 46.5 x 29 cm. London, National Gallery, inv. no. NG776. Photo credit: The National Gallery, London. Licensed for use under a Creative Commons agreement.



Fig. 6: Valencian illuminator, *Book of Hours of Alfonso of Aragon*, c. 1436-1443. London, British Library, ms. 28962, f. 78r. Photo credit: The British Library Board.



Fig. 7: Johannes Stradanus, *Color Olivi* from *Nova Reperta*, 1580s-1590s, engraving, 20.4 x 27.1 cm. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1948,0410.4.204. Photo credit: ©Trustees of the British Museum.